

1848
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"WE BEING DEAF YET SPEAKING"

A SERMON,

AT ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, TORONTO, ON
SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 1845.

ON THE
OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

WILLIAM CAMPBELL, ESQ.
OF CHURCH STREET, DUNDEE.

BY THE REV. JOHN BARCLAY, A.M.,
Pastor of St. Andrew's Church.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY JAMES WATKINS, AT THE BRITISH AMERICAN OFFICE.

1845.

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1910

"HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH."

A SERMON,

DELIVERED IN

**ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, TORONTO, ON
SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 1847,**

ON THE

OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

WILLIAM CAMPBELL, ESQ.

Of Olive Grove, Yonge Street.

BY THE REV. JOHN BARCLAY, A.M.

Pastor of St. Andrew's Church.

Toronto:

PRINTED BY JAMES WATKINS, AT THE BRITISH CANADIAN OFFICE.

1848.

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SERMON.

Hebrews, xi. 4—"He being dead yet speaketh."

THESE words refer to the righteous Abel, whose faith was manifested in the sacrifice which he offered unto God. He had received directly from God himself an assurance of the acceptance of his offering—as having presented "a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;" and although he found an early and a bloody grave, yet that grave did not silence the testimony which his life had borne; but, from it there came forth a voice which proclaimed the truths connected with that faith, whereby his life had been distinguished. Nor, although so many centuries have since revolved, presenting in varied detail the events of the world's history down to this very hour—has that voice been silenced, nor that testimony lost—for "he being dead yet speaketh."

There was, indeed, a peculiarity in the character of that testimony, uttered by the deeds of "the faith and patience" of the righteous Abel, which afterwards dwelt on his death-sealed lips, and whose echo still lingers round his memory. But, in the principle on which it rests, it does not stand as a solitary fact of which no other illustration can be afforded. It is, indeed, a glorious instance of the enduring nature of all that pertains to the kingdom of righteousness—which thus triumphs over the *passing* and the *perishable*. But it involves, also, a general principle, in some respects inherent in the very condition of our being, and of whose operation we are presented with innumerable illustrations in the history of man; the

principle, namely, that the results of which the human mind is the subject, in its thoughts, its belief, its actions, and its hopes, are not confined to the occasion of their first experience, but assume a character of perpetuity and exert an influence beyond the individual who experiences them.

The influence which mind thus has upon mind, in the present and active scenes of life, is a matter of daily observation. The thoughts that breathe in individual breasts, forming the views and developing the character of *individual* man, produce results which survive the moment of their first existence, and overstep the experience of the mind in which they sprung into being. And is it so that this is commensurate only with the present life? Are these results that are interrupted by time and distance, or destroyed by death? Take the question in its simplest form—what is the change which in this respect is produced by death? It does, indeed, accomplish much in other respects. It arrests the activities of life; it dissolves by its touch all the glory of man; it severs ties whose separation causes other hearts to bleed; and when the mysterious principle of life has fled, and left the earthly tabernacle to mingle with its kindred dust, it would seem as if this last evening of man had triumphed over all that constitutes man! But has it actually effected a change like that? has it added to its other triumphs, the triumph over human existence to the utter extinction of the nature of man? Assuredly no! Into the dark recesses of the tomb, the light of Truth and of Hope has penetrated,—revealing to us alike the immortality of the disembodied spirit, and the final reconstruction of the disorganized body as

its future dwelling place again. So that with such a destiny before them, as they successively left this scene of things, departed generations may thus be truly described as those that are asleep.

But, besides this immortality which hath been brought clearly to light, as that to which man shall finally attain, there is a sort of *earnest* of its reality *here and now*, in the durability that is stamped on the finished course of those who, themselves, have passed into the land of forgetfulness. They leave behind them the record of their deeds to maintain a testimony, and exercise an influence after they are gone. The very silence of the grave is expressive. It assumes a tongue which speaks in tones that reach the heart with a softened and affecting eloquence. Who can stand by the grave of a departed friend, and feel as if nothing but the dust remained? Are there not there, also, the remembrances of thought which can never die? Are there not associations of the living which refuse to be severed from the dead? Let memory pursue its recollections!—and will it not summon up scenes which seem to assume a second existence; as in the hallowed associations of the past it presents the interesting details anew? So that of the silent occupant of the tomb, who has gone to his rest, it may be asserted, in the language of the text, that “he being dead yet speaketh.”

The subject presented in the text may be considered,—*First*, with reference to the facts it proclaims;—*Secondly*, in connection with the *truths* it announces, or confirms by the testimony it affords; and *lastly*, with regard to the *influence* it is fitted to exercise.

I. Let us consider the text in connection with the facts which it proclaims. As a general principle it may be asserted that the plainest and most convincing exponent of a fact, is its own practical exhibition or development. Description may do much in the way of presenting it in idea to the mind ; argument may enforce the probabilities connected with it ; but it remains for the occurrence and illustration to set aside every cavil, and to furnish after all the most incontrovertible proof.

The most prominent fact to which the text refers, is thus situated :—the announcement was early made, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” It was the voice of God that uttered the solemn truth ; and it was thus stamped with certainty as an event that should actually happen. It was a fact, however, which, although thus attested, mankind were slow to believe ; and which, notwithstanding alike of its certainty and of its momentous consequences, has ever found in the human heart a disposition personally to disregard it. It is an event that needed the most solemn assurances ; and what assurance could be greater than its own actual occurrence ? What more affecting and convincing demonstration ? Death enters the circles which friendship had bound together by the most endearing ties ; it interrupts the happiness which filled the heart of each and beamed in the countenances of all. Heralded to its work of desolation by enfeebling sickness and racking pain—the premonitors of the frailty of our frame—it completes at last its triumph over earthly hopes, and over the regrets and sympathies of human hearts, by carrying away the successive generations of our race from the activities of life, and from the homes which affection hallowed.

The transition is a mysterious one from life to death—from the consciousness, the effort, and the enjoyment of the present scene, to the silence and solitude of the grave. But that solitude has a voice and a language of its own; it is itself the utterance of a great truth—the memento of a fact of which it is the practical development; it is the solemn assertion of man's mortality!—the declaration and the proof that "man that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not."

It is thus that death is embodied in a tangible reality, and transmitted from age to age, as the common inheritance of man. Often as the tomb throws open its gloomy portals, to receive the continuous stream of intrants to its dark domains, it anew records the fact that death is man's inevitable destination; that disposed as those may be to whom health and strength are assigned, to forget or to disregard the certainty of its approach, still the proof is continually presented in that testimony which the *departed* furnish, that "it is appointed unto men once to die." It is written as the common epitaph of all; although, perhaps, the only thing they had in common—that they died. The decaying body, on which corruption fastens; the grassy mound, beneath which it dissolves into its kindred dust; the tablet, on which affection records a few incidents in the simple story of the earthly career; all have a voice for the ear of contemplation! And through these tokens of mortality, it is true of the occupant of the grave that "he being dead yet speaketh"—proclaiming the certainty that "the earthly house of this tabernacle must be dissolved."

But another fact is thus and thence announced : It is that this mortal is linked to immortality ; that the grave is only the valley of the shadow of death. As the toil-worn and weary lay them down at the close of the day, and are for a time wrapt in the unconsciousness of sleep, so apparently, at least in respect to the body which is laid aside at death, the weary traveller in the journey of life finds a resting place for his labours in the grave. But it is a sleep which shall have an awakening. Revelation has disclosed this as a certainty—having brought life and immortality clearly to light. The fact of a resurrection from the dead, has been written on the very emblems of the corruptible ; nature had embodied it in dark and distant analogies, as year by year she presented the varied loveliness with which she adorned the summer landscape, erewhile covered with winter's desolations ; and in the change from the withered stem to the fresh foliage and expanding blossom, there might be traced the probability of a revival from the desolations of the grave. In varied manner was this analogy presented, amid the opening beauty of the revolving year. But it is no longer left for analogy or conjecture to proclaim it, from the probable it has passed into the certain ; from being a speculation it has become a fact. Reflected from these holy oracles, the truth has penetrated the dark recesses of the tomb ; it has given to the silent occupant of that narrow house a voice which tells that "this corruptible must put on incorruption"—proclaiming as if in audible speech that death, which has triumphed over and dissolved the mortal, must itself at length yield to the immortal—as that disorganised body, which the lapse of time scatters into dust, shall

be reconstructed into a living frame, when "death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed." Oh! it is the triumph of the Gospel over the mortality of man; that what science could never discover, nor reason demonstrate—that the hopes which imagination could not realize, and which even affection hardly ventured to cherish—are by it clothed in an actual reality; that the doubts which encircled the resting place where the ashes of the righteous silently repose, are dispersed by the radiance of the Sun of Righteousness; and that the fetters of that prison-house of the dead are burst asunder by the living Saviour, who, having swallowed up death in victory, have ascended gloriously, with the laurels of His triumph, over its strength and sting.

II. In addition to the facts thus announced in the manner described in the text, there is also a testimony thence borne in confirmation of certain important truths; with regard to which it may be said of the occupant of the grave, that he "being dead yet speaketh"—proclaiming them as truths whose meaning and importance are not destroyed, but established by death. In proof of this, turn for a little to the special case to which the text refers: it was the entrance of death into the world. This was the first victim whom he seized. The details of that scene in which, in unnatural and fatal cruelty, the hand of brother was lifted against brother, need not be here minutely narrated. But what was the occasion of it? Abel had presented unto God a more acceptable gift than Cain. The latter had offered the fruits of the field—so far a becoming token of thanksgiving to the God of Nature, the Father of Mercies, whose bountiful

hand pours out in abundance the gifts which His providence affords. But Abel's was the offering which became man to offer, as standing in need not only of sustenance for the body, but of mercy for the soul. His was at once the thankful heart, acknowledging its obligations for mercies received, and the penitent heart making its confession of sins committed. The sacrifice he thus offered up prefigured the great propitiation for sin; for it was by reason of its direct reference to it, that it is said to have been "by faith that Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."

It seemed, indeed, as if that righteous man had gained but little by this preference of his offering, when no sooner had there been afforded a visible token of God's acceptance of it, than he became the object of a brother's implacable resentment, and at length fell a victim to his murderous blow. But going down to the grave he carried with him a testimony to the character of his offering, and a token of its acceptance, which death did not destroy, and could not even conceal. For he, being dead, yet speaketh of the ground of a sinner's safety as resting on the merits of Jesus, whom his sacrifice prefigured. Yes, and it is a testimony which, enlarged and explained by the clearer facts and revelations of later times, comes from the graves of all who have cherished like precious faith. This testimony was lifted in many an age by those who died in faith before the fulfilment of the promise, and by all who, under its influence, afterwards entered into their rest. The fires of persecution could not consume it—the lonely dungeon could not waste it. There were cruel tortures that once had to be endured for its sake ;

none of them all could silence the testimony for this precious truth. It dwells on the lips that are closed in death, having dwelt in the heart that felt its happy influence ; in the lonely wilderness it lifts its voice—where the righteous have sealed their testimony with their blood ; it lingers around the scenes where its triumphs were exhibited, when the faithful in Christ Jesus refused deliverance for its sake, and that they might obtain a better resurrection ; it speaks in the ear of affection in scenes of present and peaceful repose, wherever a humble believer has entered into his rest,—proclaiming as its only, and yet a sufficient, consolation to bereaved hearts, that though it demands its tribute of sorrow from the living, yet that to the departed who have finished their course and kept the faith death is gain ; that the hope which maketh not ashamed is a hope which triumphs over the grave.

Mankind benefit but little in the great emergencies of life, from the energies which might be equal to the task of meeting the lesser demands of every day experience ; but which cannot face the difficulty or the danger when it comes. The seamanship which has learned only to paddle along the shore in the sunshine and the calm, but when the storms arise and the darkness settles down around, and when the necessity comes to stretch out into the deep, is thrown at once into perplexity ! Is it to such resources that in these circumstances men would willingly, or could prudently, entrust their property or their lives ? Ignorant of whither to direct the course, or how to turn and guide the vessel—with neither chart nor compass, nor sufficient knowledge how to use

them—what could be looked for as the issue of such an adventure, but the utter loss of all.

There is enough of this embarking on the ocean of life, thus at a venture. The sails are set to catch the pleasant gales of wordly enjoyment. The vessel of man's hopes, freighted with the destiny of the immortal soul, is steered towards the delusive meteors that appear in the horizon—the wandering stars of human ambition! But what and whether is the result? There is a way that seemeth good unto a “man, but the end thereof is destruction.” To make shipwreck of the interests of the soul, is the sure and fearful destination of many a fair and apparently a prosperous voyage on the ocean of life. If there be a course which, however beset with the storms and perils of life, conducts at last to the peaceful haven of the heavenly rest, is not that the one which the highest prudence would dictate, and the most enlightened wisdom approve, and whose result would furnish its own commendation? There are many opinions, and views, and principles, which are regarded by multitudes good enough for life to be spent under their influence; as furnishing for man all that he needs. But tell me of those that serve for support at death, to such as properly understand their position then, and without further test these may be pointed to as the truth:—“the truth as it is in Jesus;” the truth which the believer receives as a living principle within him, and whereby he is sanctified; the truth which however illustrated during life, has its test and triumph on the bed of sickness and of death; the truth which receives a testimony to its certainty and value, even from the silent grave of those who

died in faith!—so that of its blessed results the believer “being dead yet speaketh.”

Imagine the graves of earth's buried generations—as in figure they may be regarded—thus endowed with the faculty of giving utterance to the results of the completed experience of life. How varied the expression? Is it the resting place of one who had known life only as a scene for the pursuit, or the possession of worldly prosperity; who had abundance of this world's good things—the riches, the honours, the enjoyments of this life; or, who spent his days only in seeking them, but who had paid no attention to the pursuit of the riches which neither moth nor rust can corrupt? Would not that grave tell of the utter worthlessness of all that was possessed in the absence of that which was disregarded? Would not its testimony be a positive and ready response to that searching question:—“What doth it profit a man, though he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” Yes! what doth it profit him?

Is the testimony greatly dissimilar which would come from the completed course of the votary of any, or of all that pertains merely to this world? Does it not proclaim that all the glory of man is as the flower of the grass? But listen to the response which comes from the grave, where the righteous repose in peace. If rightly interpreted it is just the truth which this word conveys, as it tells how the “wicked was driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous had hope in his death.” It shows how religion, which formed the stay of the believer during his earthly pilgrimage, leaves the radiance of hope around his tomb; it

gives a voice to the very emblems of mortality which says, that "precious in the Lord's sight is the death of his saints." That to him their very dust is dear, "that for such as thus depart in faith there is in store the resurrection unto life, the new song, the entrance into the new Jerusalem, the palm of victory, the white robe, the ceaseless services, and the unfading crown of glory!"

In the language which revelation has given it, that voice proclaims how this is the good part which shall not be taken away; it tells how safety was found in Christ, when there was none else to afford it; that even though the path might lie through manifold temptations, and the tried believer had to pass through great tribulation, still the end was worthy of it all—worth the seeking, worth the having, worth the parting with all else in order to possess it; for these "light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out a far more exceeding, even an eternal, weight of glory."

III. The text may also be considered with regard to the influence which the testimony it refers to, is fitted to exert on us, to whom it comes. We have seen what that testimony is, and how it vindicates the career of the righteous. Ought that voice to be unheeded and that testimony disregarded? You have only to realize the actual state of the case, in the truths that are thus proclaimed from the silent grave, and the circumstances in which they are uttered, to be convinced that this voice—this testimony not only may exercise such influence, but ought to do so; and that it shall assuredly do so, when its important announcements are fully pondered and adequately felt. Does experience furnish no instance of mankind leaving behind

them an influence which tells upon their fellow men after they, themselves, are gone? The influence which mind has upon mind, in giving origin or modification to the opinions of another mind, is not dependent for the permanence of its effect on the continuance of the original circumstances connected with their formation.

The reception of the truths thus communicated and of the instruction thus afforded, or the doubts which are thus raised, and the scepticism thus awakened, are mental or moral results which, after they have been produced in the individual receiving these impressions, do not necessarily require for their duration the presence of those by whom they were originally imparted. A single interview, a casual expression—much more the deliberate and oft repeated sentiments impressed upon our minds in the intercourse of life, especially by those whom we respect and whose opinions we value—may thus have an enduring influence on our entire course thereafter. Distance may have separated us from them, or death may have rendered it impossible that they should ever meet with us again, but memory may have treasured up the “thoughts that breathe and words that burn ;” and the opinions that they were instrumental in forming in our minds, or the views they were the means of developing, may be the very views and opinions we cherish still. Thus furnishing the proof that it is a matter of supreme importance to exercise care as to the individual with whom we associate, and that we ought to be scrupulous as to the character and tendency of the principles and opinions of those whom we admit to an influence over us ; whilst it furnishes, also, a practical

illustration of the text, with regard to the influence imparted from the grave,—“He being dead yet speaketh.”

But should memory prove treacherous, and these impressions be evanescent, or should we never have been admitted to a living intercourse with those from whom these sentiments proceeded, still there are other ways in which their influence may come to us. Thoughts, sentiments, opinions, principles—fitted to benefit or injure—may be committed to the press and published to the world; they extend to a wider circle than the voice which uttered them could reach; and they receive a quality of continuance which thus actually gives them an influence on the course of far future generations. Individuals, who are separated by intervening centuries, may in this manner hold converse with each other: the dead to give, and the living to receive, the views thus imparted. Our minds in this manner may be admitted to a communion with the minds of those whose lips have long been silent in the dust, or whom we had never seen face to face, for “they being dead yet speak” to us. Is it a book that was meant and fitted to unsettle the faith of men, and to instil into their minds the most dangerous principles, such as infidelity or immorality has not unfrequently furnished; adorned it may be with many graces of fancy, but only the better adapted on that account to disguise the poison and betray the unwary into its reception? It cannot be recalled from that publicity and perpetuity it has received. It was not written under sense of the fear of the Lord, nor under the influence of the world to come. Oh! if these had been regarded it should never have

seen the light. But, how tremendous the responsibility, not only to go heedlessly to the region of darkness and despair, but to drag others towards the same destruction, thus to pollute hearts that had otherwise been pure, and to destroy hopes that might else have been cherished ; to bring into the happy homes of youths who were under the training of pious parents, in the ways of wisdom, that mental poison which blights the early promise ; and in the moral desolation it leaves behind, presents a fearful spectacle of how men "being dead can yet speak" to mislead and to destroy.

But the subject, in this view of it, has its bright side also. You find it in the sacred effusions of the faithful dead, who before their departure gave forth the lessons of a wisdom they had learned from above. It might be the pious hymn which the lips of little children, thus brought to Christ, were taught to utter—and in uttering which imbibed the first lessons of their faith ; or themselves received the bent which formed the current and character of their lives ; or it might be reason's noblest tribute to the truth, in rising to the height of some great argument which prostrated the champions of infidelity, and "justified the ways of God to man." It might be the simple biography of the pious dead, which guided and comforted succeeding travellers in the heavenly course—as it pointed out to them the way in which they might be followers of those who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises. Or there might be nothing more than the recollection of the work of faith, and labour of love, of those whom you have yourselves known in the flesh, and whose completed course you can now contemplate, as, amid the associations

which hallow these remembrances, you hear how "they being dead yet speak" to you. Instances there may be in which both precept and example were pressed upon the attention with all the earnestness of affectionate concern for the welfare of those who were thus sought to be led in the ways of wisdom; and yet these instructions, when given through the living voice, and that pattern while presented in the daily department, may have been ineffectual for the production of such a result. Still, when death has silenced that voice, and terminated that mortal career, there may come from the grave an influence which operates more effectually through the remembrance. It may be witnessed in some such scene as this—of which the world's history may furnish many an instance: An aged mother, whose chief care and comfort in her long widowhood had been the training of her son in the fear of the Lord; for a while her pious solicitude was successful, or seemed to be so, and she looked forward to the future career of that child of her many prayers, as to be such as should gladden her heart and become the stay of her declining years. But, alas! other influences began to assail him;—temptation came and he did not shun it, wicked companions led him astray;—a bad book fell in his way, unsettled his faith, and completed the dispersion of the fear of the Lord from his heart. The precepts of that parent were forgotten, her affectionate entreaties were no longer heeded. He broke the ties that once were binding, and away from the restraints of that little household—of which he might have been the hope and stay—he entered on a career of folly which brought down the gray hairs of that parent with sorrow to the grave. But perhaps he is arrested

in his course of guilt by the hand of sickness: reflection is then forced upon him; other days rush into his memory, with thoughts of that once peaceful and happy home, and revived remembrances of that aged parent then no more, and of the lessons of piety she had taught him. They give a voice to her silent grave, and to her scattered dust, and to her own pious example, which reaches the heart in commendation of wisdom's ways with a more subduing eloquence than her living tongue could utter—"She being dead yet speaketh."

Oh! there are many ways in which a happy influence for God and truth survives the perishable circumstances in which it originated. Tell me, ye who have had the benefit of that domestic training in the lessons of the gospel, which was wont to be the glory of our native land, have you not felt it in many cherished recollections of other days, which even the business of life, and perhaps a rough collision with the world have not obliterated from your hearts? Some circumstance of the passing hour may send back the thoughts of bygone events and youthful scenes that are still encircled with a hallowed influence. The quiet Sabbath evenings, when the public services of the house of prayer were ended; the assembled household, where the instructions of the sanctuary were followed up by the pious admonitions around the domestic hearth! The family circle in which these things were wont to be may long since have been broken up—its members separated from each other by distance or by death. But may not the survivors have caught the spirit and carried with them the remembrance of these departed things?

Such scenes are green and sunny spots in the memory of other years, on which the mind, in its most devout frame, may often since have loved to repose, and to which the thoughts may still revert to gather benefit from the contemplation, when the testimony which thus comes from departed scenes, and individuals, and events, is one that speaks for God and truth—for the duties, the hopes, the verities of religion. Oh! happy is the influence thus imparted—blessed the results that flow from it! It may not be able to contend with the louder calls of the world, or be heard above the turmoil of its contentions; but in the quiet hour of contemplation, when the mind is in a devout frame, its “still, small voice” enters the ear and impresses on the fleshy tablet of the heart some precious truths, whose influence may afterward be felt—and never but for the better—in many a time of need during the pilgrimage of life. It is thus that the record of the faith and patience of the saints exists after they are gone, to influence the cause of far future generations—thus that their mantle falls as they ascend, to impart to others the graces of their example—thus that the hopes which dwell on their dying lips are not lost in their expiring breath, but survive their entrance into rest; so that, though dead, they yet speak to us of those things in which they finished their course and kept the faith, and left an example that we should follow their steps.

Listen, then, to the admonition thus addressed to you. Be followers of those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises. The memory of their achievements in the faith dwells upon the earth. The indestructible elements of their history survive. They compass you about

as a great cloud of witnesses, and summon you to the race of faith and patience. Animated by their example, and faithfully treading in their steps—so far as they followed Christ—be it yours to finish your course and keep the faith, and enter at last on the enjoyment of the rest which remains for the people of God.

The subject in illustration of which these remarks have been offered, has a direct bearing on the circumstances in which I address you. Death has once more entered the circle of this congregation. An Elder of this Church has been called hence. The first breach has been made in the Session so recently appointed to have the oversight of its spiritual affairs. In ordinary circumstances, the Church of our fathers does not deem it advisable that, from her pulpits, public and pointed notice should be taken, whether of the living or of the dead, rightly judging that this is not the place for lauding either, and lest the practice should prevail to an undue interference with that which should be our constant theme—Christ Jesus, and him crucified. But the removal by death of an office-bearer in the Church, breaks a tie of a solemn and sacred kind, between a departed brother and us who remain, which gives with reference to us as a congregation a prominence to an event, with which as individuals we may all sympathize, and that calls for the tribute which, from this place, I would pay to his memory. He has been removed from amongst us—a pilgrim has reached the close of his mortal career—a believer has laid aside the burden of the earthly tabernacle—a Christian, we trust, is with his God! What he was as a man and a member of the community,

his upright and honourable life of strict integrity furnished the evidence. What he was in the more intimate relationships of life, and within the circle which affection hallows by a separation from the public gaze, there are amongst you bereaved hearts which can bear the most unequivocal testimony—as they sorrow for this, “that they shall see his face no more.” Within the privacy of these sorrows, with which we all sympathize, I would not unnecessarily intrude; and yet, if anything might give consolation and submission in the midst of them, it may well be the strong confidence which may be entertained, that “absent from the body he is present with the Lord;” nor may it be denied to sorrowing survivors to seek comfort in the reflection, that “what is their loss may be his gain.”

I am persuaded, that none who saw our departed friend in his last illness, and marked the patient resignation with which he bore his protracted sufferings of no common severity, yet without a murmur, but must have felt it was not so much the fortitude of a manly heart rising above its sufferings, as the humble submission of a heart which divine grace had touched, and rendered obedient to the will of God, in its readiness to suffer whatever He should send. His death-bed was emphatically one of peace; and the peculiar feature of his religion was its deep humility, not venturing on any boastful declaration of its strength and assurance, but content with feeling and asserting his hope and trust in his God and Saviour, who giveth grace unto the humble. In him was pre-eminently exhibited, not so much the speculative as the practical of religion—an

evidence of how the religion of Jesus, as a living principle in the heart, is pre-eminently adapted for that great emergency—the close of life. His lips uttered it as he spake of the hope that was in him. His whole deportment confirmed it; and now, that his voice is silenced so that its living testimony can no longer fall upon the ear; now that the tomb has closed over all that was mortal of him whom we are no longer to behold in the flesh, still “he being dead yet speaketh.”

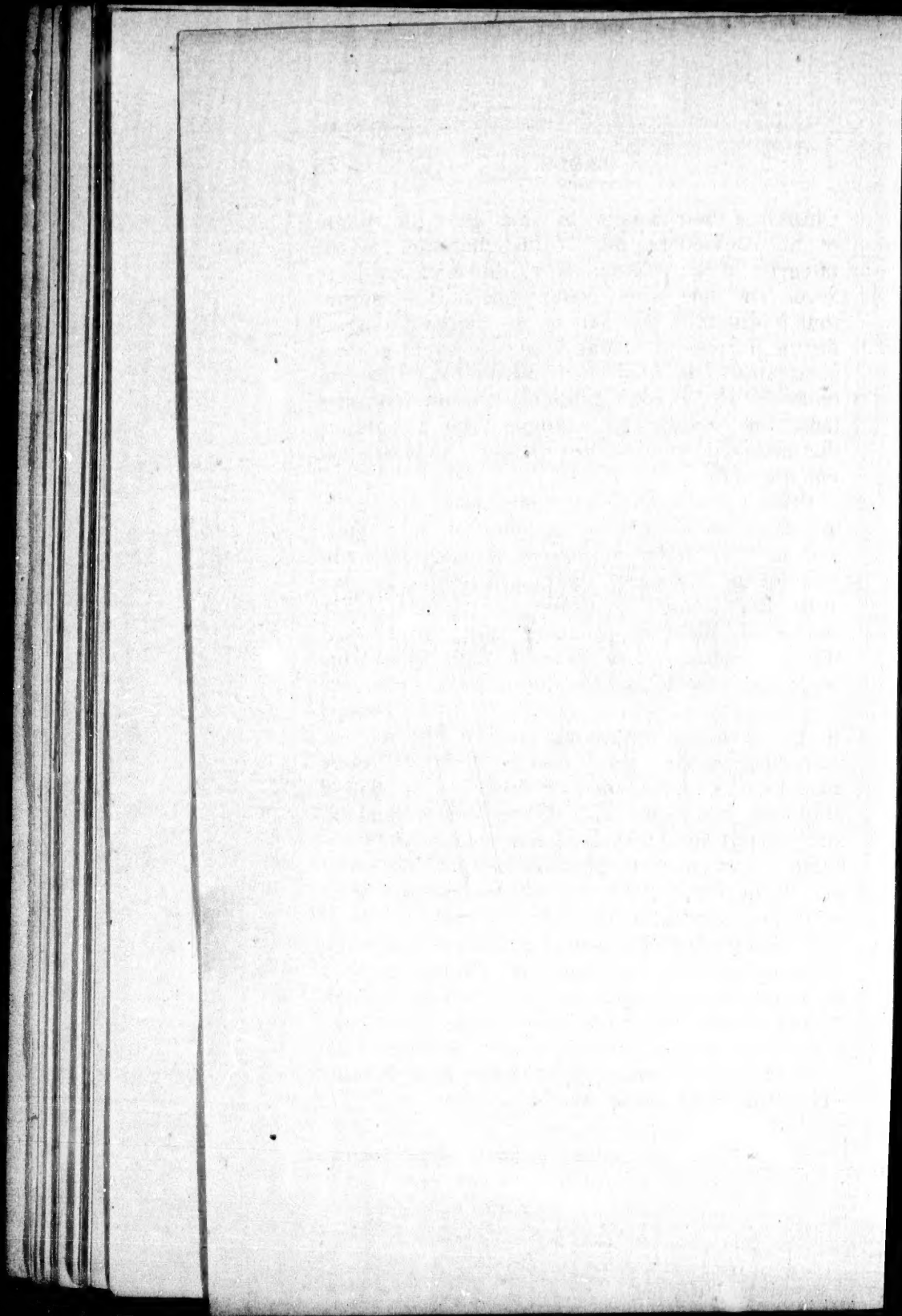
From the silent grave he speaks to us the lesson that death inevitably awaits us all—that over us too the grave shall at last close—for us the mourners shall go about the streets; and to every one of us there comes the warning, “Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.” From that grave he speaketh of the great value of religion, as furnishing the best, the only preparation for a dying hour—and how that religion which presents to the weary and heavy laden a relief from the burden of their sins, in Christ Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, our propitiation with the Father, our advocate and intercessor at the right hand of God—how the religion which furnishes such hopes to man is the only one that can then be valuable; but at the same time proclaiming how, in order to be of avail, it must be received as a living, practical principle into the heart—to guide our views—to direct our hopes—to develop itself in the duties of faith, and patience, and the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. Think you that such having been the testimony of his life, and such the testimony uttered from his grave, it would be different—save perhaps in the intensity with which it

would be uttered—were he now to give it from amid the actual realities of the world of spirits, whence it would be the testimony, not of faith, but of vision—nor of hope, but of possession and actual experience. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath in store for them that love him.” He “being dead yet speaketh” to admonish us of present duties, that we be up and doing whilst it is called to-day. It is a voice of warning to the wayward and such as neglect the great salvation—a voice of encouragement to the humble believer—a voice which proclaims that it is not in matters of mere ecclesiastical organization, nor in points of doubtful disputation, but in humble faith and active piety, that the true character of the believer is to be found.

And, if I may further refer to that office which he held amongst us, and to the circumstances in which he assumed it, I would say that, distinguishing between the excitement of party and zeal for the honour of Christ—knowing as he did that *assertion* is not always equivalent to *fact*, even though conscientiously made by those who imagined they were doing God service by their denunciations—his attachment to the Church of his fathers was not shaken. In the day of her tribulation he stood firmly by her, when bitter things were wont to be unjustly said against her. Hence, though he hesitated on account of his humble estimate of his own fitness, to undertake the office of a Ruling Elder in this Church, he hesitated not from any doubt as to her true scriptural position. And in undertaking that office at a time when the love of many was waxing cold towards the venerable

Church of their fathers, he thus gave the weight of his convictions and of his character to the integrity of her position as a Church of the Lord Jesus, and died in her communion. If I venture thus to allude to that part of his course, it is not for the purpose of casting blame on such as were constrained, by what they considered to be the calls of duty, to act a different part, but to confirm those who followed his example, and to hold up the testimony which in this respect "he being dead yet speaketh."

Brethren, a solemn call is addressed unto us all this day, that we gird up the loins of our minds, and have our lamps burning as becomes those who wait for the coming of their Lord. For the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night. You cannot tell when the summons shall reach yourselves—whether in the dawn of youth, should that be yours—or in the noonday of manhood's strength, in which you may now rejoice—or in the evening of age, whose admonishing shadow may now be gathering around you. Be ye therefore ready also, for at an hour when ye think not the Son of Man cometh. And, oh! if you would hope to find comfort *then*, seek the Lord while he may be found. Let yours be the religion of the heart and life, if you would have it available as your hope in death; so that, being thus followers of those who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises, you may depart in peace when your summons comes; and in the holy influence which in such a case you shall leave behind, over you also, in a happy sense, it may be said with reference to your example to those who remain, "He being dead yet speaketh."



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16, 31, for "reception?" read "reception."

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18, 19, for "department" read "deportment"

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